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State Department review
completed

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
5 November 1963

DIA review(s) completed.

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Current Situation in Haiti

1. Duvalier's grip on Haiti has been strengthened in the past several months. Most of the information at hand indicates that the three abortive exile attacks led by General Cantave in August and September actually helped the regime to consolidate its forces and gave it three successive "victories" over its loudest opponents. Since the last Cantave raid on 23 September, his and other exile groups have been weakened and thrown off balance. They are believed to be discouraged and relatively inactive at present as far as planning new incursions into Haiti is concerned.

2. The chaotic political situation in the Dominican Republic following the 25 September coup which deposed President Juan Bosch has also served to strengthen Duvalier. Bosch and Duvalier are arch enemies, and so long as Bosch was president of the neighboring republic he constituted a threat to the Duvalier regime. Although the new government in Santo Domingo has not made any overtures concerning the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries, it has sent a plane load of relief supplies to Haiti to help the country combat the devastating effects of Hurricane Flora.

3. Following the cessation of US aid to Haiti in August, Duvalier became increasingly cool toward US officials. This attitude persisted until Flora struck southwestern Haiti. Initial US offers of emergency assistance were not accepted, but when

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the extent of damage became known, Duvalier apparently changed his mind. Immediately the government-controlled news media began to praise "our staunch friends to the north who always assist us in adversity." Newspaper articles began to acclaim a new era of greater understanding and reported that relations with the US were on an upswing with new aid forthcoming. The government praised the efforts of US helicopter pilots transporting emergency relief supplies to isolated communities and hailed the work that the relief agencies were doing. Most recently the government began making overtures to the US Embassy in Port-au-Prince for long-term aid to rebuild the devastated areas.

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5. Duvalier's complete about-face in accepting emergency aid and requesting long-term aid may well have stemmed from his inability to secure help from other quarters. Even before August, Duvalier had tried without success to get aid from several West European nations, threatening that if aid were not forthcoming, he would turn to the Soviet bloc. The dictator may have approached the bloc, but there is no evidence to support this.

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7. A full assessment of the damage of Haiti resulting from Hurricane Flora may never be possible. Over 4,000 persons were killed. Crop damage was severe--especially to coffee, Haiti's primary money crop. Preliminary reports that possibly as much as one half of this year's crop was lost seem exaggerated, however, and a better estimate is that probably about one fourth of the crop (125,000 bags) was destroyed. There was also extensive wind and flood damage to road networks and peasant dwellings, but lesser damage to sugar cane fields--nearly all of which should be salvageable. While Haiti will suffer considerably, hurricane damage is not serious enough--by itself--to cause Duvalier's downfall.

8. Although Duvalier is now well entrenched, there are some potentially explosive situations which could create trouble for the dictator. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] according to rumors now circulating in Port-au-Prince, the army chief of staff, his assistant, 11 of his most competent officers, and the pro-US chief of immigration are about to be fired. Such a purge would be the second since April, when Duvalier dismissed 63 of his best trained officers. The US army attaché in Port-au-Prince does not believe that the purge is as imminent as the rumors indicate. Undoubtedly they are inspired by Duvalier to keep whatever internal opposition that remains off balance.

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11. Under present conditions, it seems highly unlikely that any internal group could bring down the Duvalier regime by armed resistance.

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ANNEX ON COMMUNIST PARTY

1. There are two Communist parties in Haiti, the People's National Liberation Party (PPLN) with about 1,500 members and the smaller Party of Popular Accord with a total of about 500 members. The parties usually have followed a policy of passive opposition to the present regime

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Although the parties are illegal, it is presumed that as long as they follow their present policy the government probably will not interfere with their activities.

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2. In mid-October the PPLN, through one of its front groups, circulated an anti-Duvalier tract. As a result, three Communist teachers were arrested on 22 October. Because of the arrest, party members were in a state of confusion and uncertainty concerning government intentions toward them--particularly since one of their leaders, arrested in August, was released on 26 October.

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